Negotiating Programming Policies for Classical Music in Danish National Radio during the Hot and Cold War

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Within the Work Package 2: Music Programme Policies, 1940-1990, I will be investigating how DR programming policies reflect and negotiate challenges from the realm of realpolitik from the late 1930s until the late 1950s. This was a time when DR as a state institution had to provide a programming policy that was independent yet in line with government policies. Pre-WWII conditions were determined by a concern not to offend the German government, and the situation was closely monitored by, for example, the Danish Ambassador in Berlin, Zahle. During the Occupation programming negotiations became a highly political matter, taking place within a field with censorship and German supervision on one side and a heightened awareness of the subtle nuances in public reception on the other. After the war, especially around 1948, a shift towards Cold War bi-polar worldviews took place.

The specific focus of the project will be a survey of the period from the pre-occupation to the early phase of the Cold War (late 1930s until the 1950s) in order to establish how programming policies were negotiated through the scheduling of radio talks, live transmissions, and programmes on classical music. The study will locate and discuss a number of cases which aroused controversy and thus generated accounts of how such matters were discussed and resolved.

This is a task that requires comprehensive contextualisation within political, cultural and music history in order to localize changes in programming policies or specific changes of programmes (cancelling, additions, changes), and in order to evaluate the significance of such events. In the shift from World War to Cold War it will be of interest to study how discourses on music and art change and how a new orientation towards US/British/Western values and the fight for the hearts and minds of the cultural and intellectual elites are fought through cultural and public diplomacy. It will be of interest to combine methods from studying music during the Occupation (highlighting censorship and official regulation negotiated through actual programming) and methods of studying cultural diplomacy which might not only be of relevance in Cold War contexts.